



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

17 APRIL 1979

AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE TO YUGOSLAV EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, announced today that the Australian Government is to donate the sum of \$100,000 to help relieve the plight of victims of the earthquake which devastated Yugoslavia's southern Adriatic region in recent days.

The Prime Minister has written to President Tito expressing the sympathy of the Australian Government and people for the tragic loss of life and property sustained by the people of Yugoslavia in this major disaster, and offering our assistance.

The Government is conscious of the concern which the large numbers of Australians of Yugoslav origin are feeling for the safety and welfare of relatives in the stricken area. Accordingly, persons wishing to enquire about the welfare of relatives and friends in Yugoslavia may ring the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra on 613474; an interpreter will be available to assist with inquiries.

As in previous such situations, the Government will act immediately to assist in relation to immigration cases. Immediate priority will be given to those nominations already in the pipeline involving people made homeless by the earthquake and priority will also be given to other nominations lodged in the immediate future which are within existing immigration criteria.

Nominations outside the normal criteria where such compassionate circumstances exist, such as where families have been deprived of their breadwinner or where children have been orphaned, will be accepted and dealt with quickly.

Immigration staff from Belgrade would go to the disaster areas as soon as possible to ensure speedy handling of applications.

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